

CASA OF COCONINO COUNTY

JUNE NEWSLETTER

National Pride Month

Excerpt from “My Two Dads Saved my Life” by Weston Charles-Gallo

Before meeting my two dads, placements in my rural community that were open and affirming to a gay, bi-racial teenager was almost non-existent. I was told by my worker that different potential placements fell through because of the fear of that I might “turn the other children gay” and the fear of predatory behaviors. So, while sitting in a residential facility under an emergency shelter status, I was on the cusp of ending my life all together.

When I met my forever family I instantly knew that it was where I was always meant to be, they welcomed me with open arms and never once made me feel like I didn’t belong. It was the first connection with a family that made feel like I was their own. With so much pain from the past, I found myself testing the limits of my fathers to see if the love they had for me was real. Instead of giving up entirely, they never failed me.

My two dads have helped me navigate discrimination, racism, homophobia, and most importantly gave me the power to be in control of my own voice and embrace who I was. For a long time, I struggled with my identity when it came to the color of my skin. Many people have asked what nationality I am. Are you Puerto Rican? Are you Cuban? Are you Hispanic? Are you mixed? As someone that identifies as both a gay man and bi-racial, being both African American and Caucasian, creates a battle within that intersectionality. One of my dads is also bi-racial and by the way he carries himself and stands so true to who he is, giving me faith and hope. He helps me understand I’m not just white, I’m not just black, and at the end of the day, I’m Weston.

To read Weston’s entire story, [click here](#).



Happy Birthday!

Stacy Matteson	6-2
Diana Lopez	6-11
Ann Blue	6-25
Dorothy Renstrom	6-30

National Reunification Month

During this month and beyond, let’s remember what reunification means—restoring, rebuilding and renovating families. Reunification takes hard work, commitment and the investment of time and resources. Let’s all support families of origin in their efforts to grow and thrive together as well as foster parents, courts, child welfare professionals and CASA/GAL volunteers by encouraging collaboration, supporting policies and standards that promote reunification. At National CASA/GAL, we are grateful to CASA volunteers for

their involvement in reunifying children with their families.

For more from National CASA, on Reunification Month [click here](#).





A Statement for Our Difficult Times

Contact: Sheryl R. Sellaway, sheryls@nationalcasagal.org, 404.695.5564

National CASA/GAL Association stands in solidarity against any kind of injustice, violence or brutality that inflicts undue harm on or disadvantages another human being. Racism is reprehensible and has no place in our society. We believe in the freedom of expression through peaceful, lawful, demonstration and that every voice has the right to be heard.

The inhumane and senseless death of Mr. George Floyd and the many others who have gone before him has rocked this nation and serves as a reminder that there is still so much work to do in our country to address the evils of racism and indifference that it can breed. It's also a stark reminder that inequality, inequity and disproportionality exist across all facets of our society, including our work with children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

As an organization, we believe it's important that we align with our mission, vision and values, inclusively understand and promote the well-being of our network and build cultural competence among staff and volunteers. By doing this, we are working to ensure equitable outcomes for all children, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation.

These sobering times serve as a reminder that it's going to take all of us, working together, to make life better for ourselves, each other and the children and families we serve.

CASA ANNIVERSARIES

Anne Blue	3
Brian Blue	3
Wendy Gilbert	3
Cathy Cole	1
Sharon Sifling	1



Upcoming CASA Events and Reminders

July 5: Contact logs due on CASAAZ Dashboard. Contact Logs = Funding and you can help by submitting contact logs on time!

Reminder: Court Reports are due **2 weeks before the hearing date**. We need them by then to edit them and judges need your reports as early as possible so they have enough time to consider your recommendations. **Your voice is your child's voice!**

Don't forget to meet with your coordinator monthly (we miss you!) and make sure to do a contact log entry after.



In Memoriam

“I’m all about youth getting every opportunity that’s afforded to them, because that’s what they’re supposed to get. If they’re not, it means that something has to change.” – Dosha “DJay” Joi, in his April 2020 interview with Kids Matter CASA in Milwaukee

Dosha “DJay” Joi was a friend, a leader, and a persistent and joyful advocate for youth. Once in foster care himself, he dedicated his young adulthood to helping youth aging out of foster care. He was a CASA volunteer for older youth at Kids Matter Inc. in Wisconsin, and a dear friend to staff there. Last week, we lost DJay to COVID-19.

In addition to serving as a CASA volunteer, he was a member of FosterClub—a group of young leaders in and from foster care—and worked to transform the child welfare system as an advocate with the National Foster Youth Institute. He received two Champion for Change Awards from the Wisconsin Department of Child and Family Services—one for his service to the Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council and the other for advocating for the extension of foster care to age 21. DJay contributed to efforts in Wisconsin to improve sibling visits and he advocated for LGBTQ youth in particular.

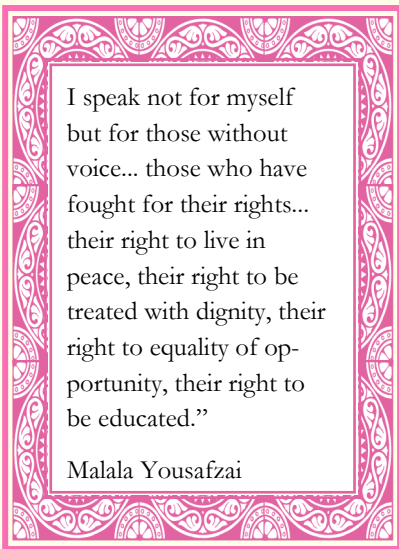


Shortly after DJay passed away, Representatives Karen Bass and Gwen Moore of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth introduced the [Dosha Joi Immediate Coverage for Former Foster Youth Act](#). The bill would immediately ensure that eligible former foster youth have access to Medicaid until age 26.

DJay was a powerful speaker and an advocate for the importance of personal connection. Susan Conwell, executive director of Kids Matter CASA, shares the following words: “DJay had more impact on us than he could ever imagine... He was always there with words of encouragement and a ‘to-do’ list on behalf of his kids—our kids—foster youth. He left us too soon, and with so much more work to do for our kids.”

CASA of Coconino County joins Kids Matter CASA in Wisconsin in mourning the loss of volunteer Dosha “DJay” Joi. A bright light has gone out of the world but we can continue his tireless work to make things better for all children in care.

https://nationalcasagall.org/the-loss-of-a-young-advocate-dedicated-to-service/?utm_source=Network+News&utm_campaign=ab5f730392-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_11_01_07_48_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3a5c7529a4-ab5f730392-37064772



Change a child’s story.

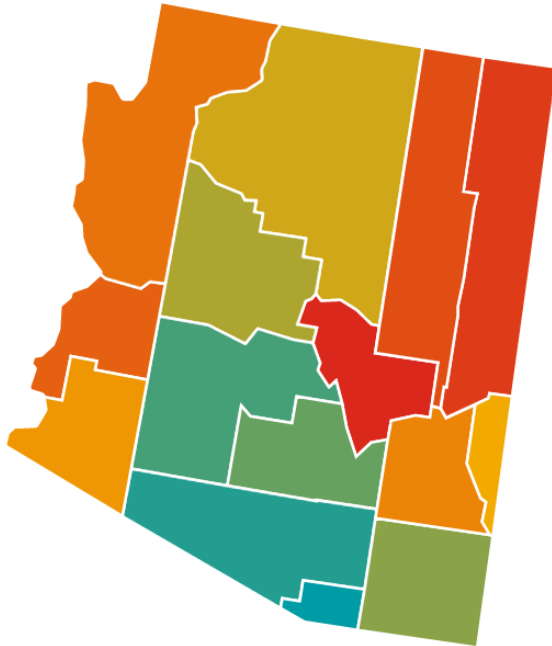
Juvenile Justice Center
1001 E. Sawmill Rd.
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Phone: 928-226-5427 (Nicole)
928-226-5420 (Jill)
Email: Nicole: nsnow@courts.az.gov
Jill: jschuldt@courts.az.gov
Felicia: fbicknell@courts.az.gov
Marilyn: mharris@courts.az.gov
Lorena: lgonzalizmorris@courts.az.gov
Vickie: vsedillo@courts.az.gov

THE BEST AND WORST PLACES FOR CHILDREN IN AMERICA

The Childhood Report ranks U.S. counties on how well they protect and provide for children.

ARIZONA



State Ranking: 38

Childhood Equity Gap: 1.9 (Small) §

State Child Poverty Rate: 20.4%

Child Indicators

Indicator	Rate	Rank/50 States
Infant Deaths:	5.4	18/50
Child Hunger:	21.3%	43/50
High School Dropouts:	22.0%	48/50
Teen Pregnancy:	20.1	33/50
Child Homicides & Suicides:	7.7	25/50



Rank	County [†]	Child Poverty ¹	Child Deaths ²	Child Hunger ³	School Dropouts ⁴	Teen Pregnancy ⁵	COVID-19 Vulnerability Score ⁶	National County Rank ⁷
1	Santa Cruz	36%	34.4	24.1%	10.2%	27.6	0.93	1353
2	Pima	22.2%	45	21.2%	26.6%	17.3	0.88	1475
3	Maricopa	18.2%	47.9	20.4%	22.4%	18.8	0.64	1504
4	Pinal	17.5%	46.3	21.3%	19.2%	21.3	0.86	1591
5	Cochise	22.8%	49	22.5%	12.3%	27.1	0.91	1649
6	Yavapai	19.2%	52.3	21.3%	17.9%	21.4	0.52	1702
7	Coconino	17.3%	61.9	23.3%	18.4%	13.2	0.71	1827
8	Greenlee	11.7%	73.6	19.5%	10.4%	32.9	0.62	1920
9	Yuma	28.3%	48.1	30.7%	11.2%	32.7	0.99	1961
10	Graham	24.4%	51.7	23.8%	14.4%	32.4	0.96	2035
11	Mohave	26.9%	61.3	24.7%	21.8%	24.4	0.86	2225
12	La Paz	31.8%	80	25.9%	16.4%	38.7	0.92	2516
13	Navajo	40.2%	76.5	29.9%	21.8%	34.2	1	2547
14	Apache	47.3%	105.9	34.2%	27.4%	28.2	0.99	2565
15	Gila	33.6%	95.8	27.1%	24.8%	40.1	0.9	2589

For the full interactive report and methodology, [click here](#). Many thanks to Becky Lewis and the United Way for providing us with this information.

Summer Safety

10 ways to prevent child hot car deaths

1. Never leave a child alone in a car, #NotEvenForAMinute!
2. Always #LookBeforeYouLock and #CheckForBaby.
3. Be extra alert if your routine changes.
4. Put something of your child's, like a toy, on the front seat.
5. Leave an item you'll need in the backseat (e.g. cell phone, purse, or even a shoe).
6. Place your child's car seat in the middle of the backseat rather than behind the driver.
7. Have daycare call you if your child doesn't show up.
8. Discuss this topic with everyone who drives your child anywhere.
9. Teach children that cars are not toys, always lock your car, and leave keys out of reach.
10. Spread the word with hashtags #NotEvenForAMinute and #LookBeforeYouLock.

Visit childrenstrustma.org/nefam for more tools and graphics.





Since Tynkertopia's temporary closure on March 14 due to the coronavirus, Dr. Alice and her staff have been creating and distributing approximately **200 STEAM Kits** each week that are distributed to students at the Boys and Girls Club and elementary schools throughout Flagstaff.

Our STEAM Kits to date have included:

- Planting seeds and recording their growth each week
- Creating paper airplanes and testing how far they will travel
- Creating hanging mobiles featuring different geometric shapes
- Creating catapults and testing how far different objects travel when launched from the catapult
- Creating anemometers to test wind direction and strength
- Creating and testing the strength of three paper columns: square, triangular, and round
- Creating boats of three shapes from aluminum foil and recording how many pebbles each will hold before it sinks
- Solving a number of toothpick puzzles
- Creating the longest possible paper chain out of one piece of construction paper
- Creating a balloon rocket

Tynkertopia supplies all the materials that kids will need to do the STEAM Challenge each week. We have created and distributed STEAM Kits for ten weeks already and will continue this practice until schools reopen perhaps in August,



Tynkertopia has been hosting online STEAM Challenges via Zoom. Kindergarten through 5th-grade students from Flagstaff, Cottonwood, Cornville, and California have participated.

We offer a different 30-60 minute challenge each **Monday, Wednesday, and Friday starting at 3 PM.**

To join, please go to <https://zoom.us/j/341778592>. There is no password.

To date, our science-based challenges have included creating:

- anemometers (to measure wind speed and direction)
- earth layer models
- geometry mobiles
- working sundials
- water cycle models
- cardboard pulleys
- geodesic cardboard forts

Our art-based challenges have included creating:

- 3D cardboard faces
- origami animals
- spring flowers
- toilet paper roll art, paper cities, and more





Summer Reading Enrichment Program

When: June 1 - July 3 from 12:00 - 1:30 pm

Where: Flagstaff Family Food Center Kitchen,
1903 N. 2nd St.

What: Children can pick up a Reading bag daily, which will include a book, snack bag, sweet treats, daily activity materials, ingredients for a healthy snack activity, library resources, a virtual experience list, and a mindfulness activity. Children will receive 1 raffle ticket per day of attendance to win a new bike! **No contact distribution**

Questions? Contact Rene RedDay, rene@hotfood.org



FIRST THINGS FIRST



FIRST THINGS

Information and inspiration for parents and caregivers
of babies, toddlers and preschoolers



[**Self-Care Isn't Selfish:**](#) Self-care tips for mothers/caregivers of young children during COVID-19

[**“Navigating the New Normal: Parents Edition”**](#) is a 20-minute video from Noggin with questions from parents and advice from leading early childhood experts to help you and your family do your best in these challenging time

[**Video-Chat Helps Babies Connect During Quarantine:**](#) This is an older article that explores the benefits to using Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, etc. to visit with babies in care. Share with parents for video visit tips!

[**Arizona Resources During COVID-19:**](#) Where to get answers to health questions about COVID19, find free meals and other vital resources.



Connection

WEEKLY ZOOM MEETING

Who

*Parents, caregivers,
professionals- All
individuals in our
community*

What

*Weekly meetings (available
by phone or computer)
through zoom. Connect and
share both challenges and
celebrations or just listen*

How

*Every Thurs day
at 3pm Arizona Time
Register at this link*

<https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tjIvdOmuqTksHdj-2D9pFyAY1Alfj09Hjowh>

COCONINOKIDS.ORG



**Coconino Coalition for
Children & Youth**
Connect. Inspire. Engage. Act.

NOW IS THE TIME TO
CONNECT, BE SUPPORT
AND RECEIVE SUPPORT IN
A SAFE AND CARING
ENVIRONMENT

Conversations with **Arizona Families** about the Impact of **Distance Learning** on **Students with Disabilities** and other **Vulnerable Populations**

Join us for this 3-part series to share your experiences with remote learning during school closures, ask questions about what comes next, and hear from Arizona education advocates and experts.

Listening Session

An opportunity for families, students, and advocates to share their distance learning successes, challenges, and questions

Thursday, June 4 -- 3 PM

Register here: bit.ly/edcovid1

Panel Discussion

Arizona education experts answer your questions, address your concerns, and provide resources and advocacy tips

Thursday, June 25 -- 3 PM

Register here: bit.ly/edcovid2

Back-to-School

Presentation on what comes next for students, including ways school in Fall 2020 may look different from previous years

Thursday, July 2 -- 3 PM

Register here: bit.ly/edcovid3

*Closed Captioning × Simultaneous
American Sign Language Interpretation ×
Simultaneous Spanish Interpretation*



New Save the Date

September 8-10, 2020 | Twin Arrows Resort Conference Center
**2020 Northern Arizona Indigenous Youth
Suicide Prevention Conference**
"Enriching the Journey"



For further announcements, please follow @reachURLife
Or visit us at <http://www.nacainc.org/reach-ur-life.html>



Proposals requested on the following topics:

- Intergenerational trauma
- Ethics & Cultural Competency/ Humility
- Brain Development
- Stories of Hope, Survival and Prosperity
- Workplace initiatives
- Mindfulness and coping, and more
- Preference for workshops that meet criteria for NASW CEUs, more details forthcoming



Conference activities include:

- Honor Walk/Run
- Engaging and interactive workshops
- Space for healing
- Training on helping someone with suicidal ideations—QPR and safeTALK
- More!

BECOME SUICIDE-ALERT



For more information, please contact NACA's Reach UR Life Program at (928)526-2968 or by email to Tallerita Tunney Rogers at trogers@nacainc.org

